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FILE PHOTO

Investors lose ₹13.47 L cr in one day as markets crash

Nifty plummeted 1.51% to 21,997.7 and Sensex fell 900 points as the markets witnessed selling pressure amid a sharp fall in smallcaps, midcaps. Utility, energy and metal stocks witnessed heavy losses. Though the benchmark indices began on a positive note, post lunch all sectoral indices closed in red. Power Grid, NTPC, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, JSW Steel, Airtel, Titan, RIL, HUL were the losers in the Sensex | P14

NITISH IN, ROHINI PANEL REPORT ON BACK BURNER

OBC sub-categorisation earlier seen as counter to caste census

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH the Nitish Kumar-led Bihar government back in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Narendra Modi government seems to have put the much vaunted Rohini commission report on 'revising the reservation percentage of OBCs' on the back burner.

Justice (Retd) G Rohini

It was widely believed that the Centre would implement the Rohini panel report on sub-categorisation of OBCs to counter the Bihar government's caste survey data, which was published in October last year.

The Bihar caste data, which pegged the backward caste population at 63%, sparked a renewed demand from the Opposition for a nationwide caste census and review of reservation for the backward classes.

While the Centrewas noncommittal about a national caste census, it was looking to woo the most backward classes by implementing the Rohini committee report and conferring some benefits on them, a source said. However, the Rohini panel report, which was submitted to the government in July last year, is yet to be published.

It is learnt that the report revealed that less than 1% of dominant backward castes have cornered 50% of the reservation benefits in admissions to central educational institutions and recruitment to central services. Of the 2,600 communities in the central OBC list, 938 sub-castes have no representation in the reserved seats. For equitable distribution of benefits, the commission has proposed to divide OBCs into subgroups with separate reservation percentages.

However, sources said that with Nitish Kumar's re-entry into the NDA, the BJP is confident of defusing the caste challenges from the Opposition.

"The BJP's main worry was the consolidation of the Extremely Backward Caste (EBC) vote bloc in Bihar. With Nitish, a Kurmi leader, back in the NDA, the party need not worry about the political ramifications of caste census. So, the government will keep the Rohini panel report in cold storage for the time being. The government is aware that the Rohini panel report will lead to political realignments as it sub-categorises all OBC groups," said a leader.

The commission was tasked with putting together a comprehensive pool of scientific data on sub-categories to as to ensure equitable redistribution of 27% quota benefits for OBCs among all sub-communities.

Dr Manjunath, Yaduveer among BJP's 20 candidates

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE BJP on Wednesday announced its candidates for 20 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state. Of them, 10 are new faces. Candidates for eight constituencies, including those to be given to JDS were not announced.

Former PM and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda's son-in-law and well-known cardiologist Dr CN Manjunath will be BJP's candidate for Bengaluru Rural constituency. Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, the scion of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family, is prominent among the new faces.

As anticipated, the BJP dropped sitting MP Pratap Simha and selected 32-year-old Yaduveer for Mysuru-Kodagu constituency. Former CM and former Union minister DV Sadananda Gowda, sitting Bengaluru North MP, has been replaced by Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, who is Udupi-Chikkamagaluru MP. It is said Shobha has been shifted to Bengaluru North in view of stiff opposition from BJP leaders and workers in Udupi-Chikkamagaluru constituency. CONTINUED ON: P4

Gadkari, Goyal, Anurag Thakur in 2nd list

New Delhi: The BJP repeated three Union ministers and fielded one minister for the first time in the Lok Sabha elections, in its second list of candidates for 72 seats in 10 states. Union Minister Piyush Goyal will make his début from the safest of Lok Sabha seats — North Mumbai | P12

EXPRESS READ

Cong's guarantees for women, youth, farmers

Kalaburagi: AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said the Congress will implement "Nari Nyay" guarantee under which five benefits will be given to women, and "Yuva Nyay" guarantee for the youth if the party is voted to power at the Centre | P11

Blast case: NIA detains man from Ballari

Ballari: The NIA detained a 42-year-old man from Cowl Bazar area of Ballari city on Wednesday in connection with The Rameshwaram Cafe blast case. The police said an NIA team picked him up from his house and took him to Bengaluru where he was released after interrogation | P4

Selection of CEC: SC to hear plea on March 15

New Delhi: The SC on Wednesday agreed to hear on March 15 a plea of an NGO challenging the exclusion of the Chief Justice of India from a panel on selecting the CEC and election commissioners. A bench took note of the submissions of Association for Democratic Reforms | P12

HC junks Congress' plea against ₹100cr tax recovery

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a setback to the Congress, the Delhi High Court on Wednesday upheld the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)'s decision not to stay the tax demand notice to the grand old party for recovery of over ₹100 crore dues for the 2018-19 assessment year.

A division bench of judges Yashwant Varma and Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav said there appears to be no fundamental infirmity in the ITAT order of March 8 and rapped the Congress for its lackadaisical approach to the tax demand. The tax department's proceedings against the Congress had started in 2021 but the party did not do anything for two years, the court noted.

The HC, however, allowed the Congress to move a fresh stay application before the ITAT bringing to its notice the tax recovery of ₹65 crore.